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SIPDIS

G - JOAQUIN FERRAO,
DRL - LAURA BRADLEY,
IO - AMY OSTERMEIER

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SUBJECT: POLAND ON COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES AND ESC VOTE

REF: 08 STATE 97313

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR DAN SAINZ FOR REASON 1.4 (D)

POLAND LIKELY TO ABSTAIN ON ESC VOTE

¶11. (C) Embassy Warsaw delivered ref A points to the Polish MFA. Miroslaw Luczka, Deputy Director of the MFA's Department of UN and Human Rights, informed us on September 24 that Poland would most likely abstain if the ESC were brought to vote because of external political factors. Luczka explained that there are "strong objections" at the expert level in the GoP, but that voting against the ESC is "not an option." Luczka did not think that a common EU position would be likely. Since so many EU member states strongly support passing the ESC and such a small number of (like Poland) are "skeptical," a "no" vote is not politically realistic. If the ESC were brought to vote, Poland's position would most likely be decided at the Under Secretary level in the MFA and Ministry of Labor, but Luczka said it could go higher if consensus proves difficult.

COMMENT

¶12. (C) Poland continues to take a principled stand on human rights issues and sees its partnership with the U.S. as crucial. That said, the GoP is also realistic about what can be accomplished. The GoP has responded positively to consultations with DRL officials via DVC, and expressed a desire to see these continued. The MFA cited bilateral follow-up discussion on the Community of Democracies and the meeting in Washington this week on Freedom of Expression as signs of the momentum the DVC has created. However, Luczka also told PolOff off-line that although Poland supports the Freedom of Expression concept paper in principle, the MFA does not have the personnel resources to be one of the key sponsors. Poland is also especially mindful of its relations and priorities within the EU.

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